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Portland, OR 97233

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U.S. EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
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I am a technician with the Department of Energy and have been a resident of Portland for thirty seven years. Because of this, I am very familiar with the Willamette River's contamination. There are signs along the river every thirty yards warning about toxins. Being near the river makes your eyes burn and your lungs hurt. It is terrible water. Because of this, I agree that something must be done to clean the Willamette. However, I do not believe that the EPA's plan to dredge 167 acres of contaminated sediment from the river bottom and transport that sediment to a landfill is the best solution.

The Willamette River's contamination is a serious problem, but when the EPA created their invasive plan, they relied on data from 2004. More recent data from 2014 shows that the river is already recovering without our interference through natural processes. If the river is naturally flushing itself out, I think that simply letting nature take its course is a better option than this plan. It is very disruptive to the natural environment and the community to dredge the river. Not only would it ruin salmon runs, it would disrupt recreation and everything else that local residents and businesses downtown use the river for.

There are better ways than mass dredging to confront this problem. We need to control what is being dumped into the river in the first place. Not only do we have combined sewage overflow going into the river, we have other pollution still entering the water today. When I go down to the river, I see needles and all sorts of other trash floating in the water. We need to control what goes into the river before we try to clean it up. Further, the EPA should consider focusing on the most intensely contaminated parts of the river and then reassess the situation before they start dredging the Portland Harbor. Any plans that would involve invasive treatment of the river should be carefully considered, but it might be better to focus on the most harmful areas. The industrial area downtown, for example, is probably one of the worst sections of the river.

Not only is the EPA's current plan not environmentally sound, it is simply not economically feasible. The original cost estimate of this plan was \$1.4 billion. While it has since been reduced to \$746 million, either cost would increase taxes too much. We already pay one of the highest tax rates in the nation. I can't afford to have my taxes raised again, and I know that many Portland residents are in the same situation. I believe that reducing the pollution of the Willamette River is important, but the Environmental Protection Agency's current plan does not meet the needs or address the current reality of the river. We need to find a way to clean the river that won't interfere with natural processes already at work.

Sincerely,

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August 19, 2016